

Job mobility drops back to pre-COVID levels

Media Release

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Source: [Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia, February 2024](#)

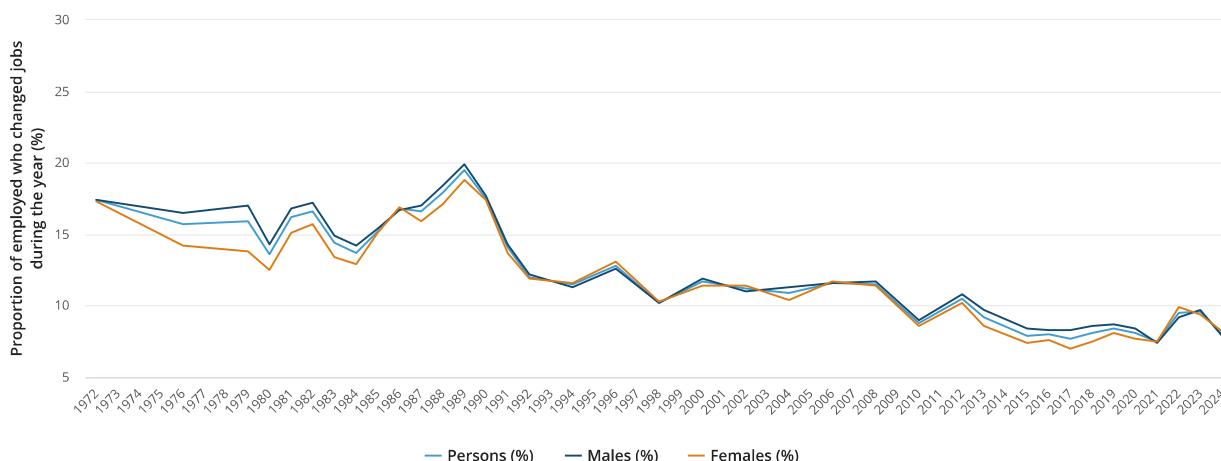
Australia's job mobility rate has fallen for the first time in three years, back to around its pre-pandemic level, according to new data released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Bjorn Jarvis, ABS head of labour statistics, said: "In the 12 months to February 2024, around 8 per cent of employed people, or 1.1 million people, changed their employer or business.

"This was down 1.5 percentage points from 9.6 per cent in February 2023 and back to around what we typically saw during the five years leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Job mobility rate by sex

Feedback



Note: Data for 2015 to 2024 are available from Table 01 of [Job Mobility](#) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/jobs/job-mobility/feb-2024#data-downloads>). Pre-2015 historical data can be found in the 2018 release of [Participation, Job Search and Mobility](#) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6226.0Main+Features1February%202018?OpenDocument>) publication.

“Job mobility rates have fallen for both men and women, but fell by more for men. As a result, job mobility over the past year was slightly higher for women at 8.2 per cent, compared to 7.9 per cent for men, after having been higher for men for most of the past decade.

“Younger workers are still more mobile than older workers, with 12.6 per cent of 15 to 24 year-olds changing jobs.

“However, youth job mobility was noticeably lower than the high of 15.9 per cent we saw in 2022 during the pandemic, and well below rates of more than 20 per cent seen 20 years ago.

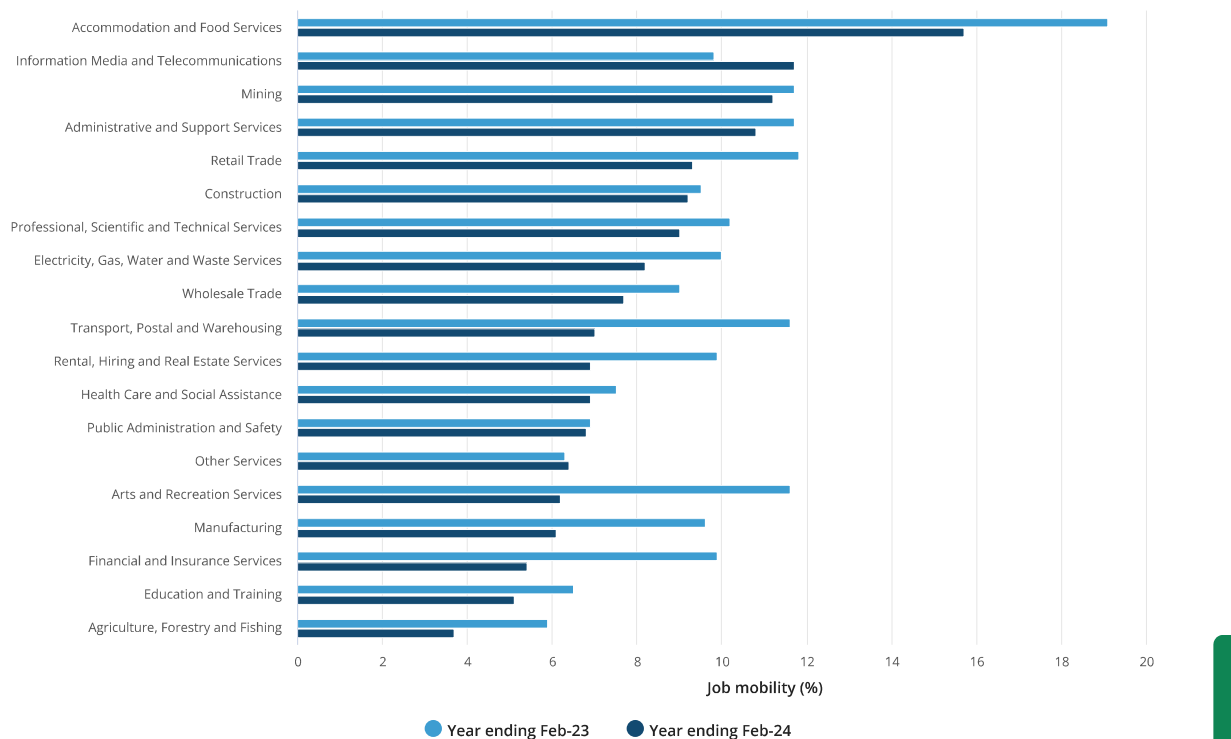
“Falls in job mobility over the past year were seen across all age groups, though they remained slightly higher than pre-pandemic levels in the older age groups.”

“Sales Workers still had the highest mobility rate, with 9.7 per cent changing jobs. This was closely followed by Community and Personal Service Workers at 9.6 per cent.”

Job mobility rates fell in all industries, except for Information media and telecommunications (+1.8 percentage points) and Other services (+0.1 percentage points).

The largest falls were in Arts and recreation services (-5.4 percentage points), followed by Transport, postal and warehousing (-4.5 percentage points).

Job mobility by industry of job that was left



Feedback

“Over the year, 36 percent of people changed to a job with the same usual hours, while 33 per cent changed to a job with fewer hours and 32 per cent changed to a job with more hours,” Mr Jarvis said.

More potential workers than last year

In February 2024, there were 1.9 million potential workers - people who were not working but who wanted to work - up from 1.8 million in February 2023.

Of these people, around 555,000 were unemployed (who were actively looking for work and available) and 1.3 million were people not in the labour force (who were either not actively looking for work and/or not available to work).

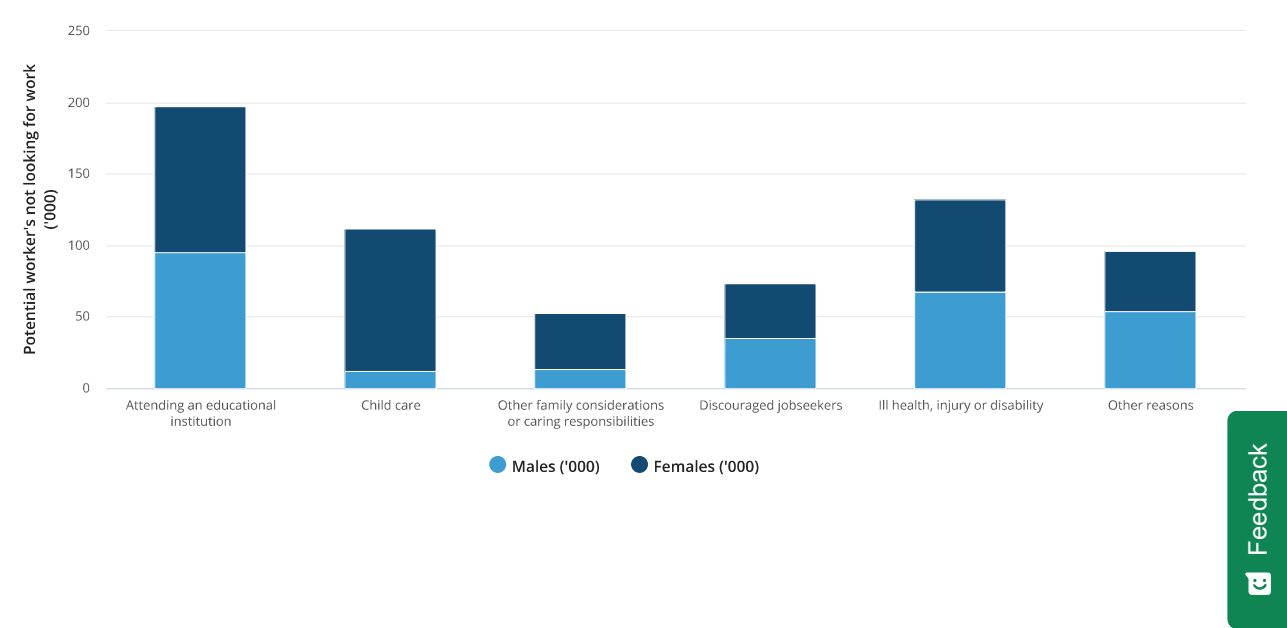
“Of the people who wanted to work, just over 1 million people were available to start work straight away, and an additional 483,000 people were available to start within four weeks but not immediately. The remaining 330,000 people said they weren’t going to be available for more than a month,” Mr Jarvis said.

There were 810,000 people in February 2024 who wanted to work, were available to start either immediately or within four weeks, but did not actively look for work.

The main reasons given were because people were attending an educational institution (197,000 people, or 24 per

cent), caring for children (112,000 people, or 14 per cent), or had a long-term health condition or disability (98,000 people, or 12 per cent).

Main reason people who were available to start work within four weeks were not looking for work



In February 2024, around 82 percent of unemployed people reported having difficulty finding work, which was similar to February 2023.

The main difficulty reported was that there were too many applicants for available jobs (12.7 per cent), followed by people saying they had insufficient work experience (10.8 per cent), or that ill health or disability was a factor (10.7 per cent).

“More people reported difficulties related to labour market conditions in February 2024, compared with February 2023, when the labour market was particularly tight,” Mr Jarvis said.

“While generally still low, more unemployed people in 2024 said the main difficulty was that there were too many applicants for available jobs, that they didn’t have enough work experience, and that there were no vacancies in their line of work.”

Media notes

- Job mobility (or job churn) refers to employed people changing their employer or business. The period in focus for this survey is the previous 12 months.
- Potential workers refers to a broad group of people in the usually resident civilian population aged 15 years and over who want to work and may be active and/or available within the labour market in the short to medium term. It includes unemployed people (who are active and available labour supply in the survey

reference week) and other groups who are not in the labour force but who want to work (people who aren't immediately available and/or people who aren't actively looking for work).

- See our new [Guide to labour statistics \(https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics) for more information about the different labour measures, their purpose and how to use them.
- [Watch our data crash course \(https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3Dle2K3PNejU4%26list%3DPLR8_RxifMwL4JQTxYcIMA\)](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3Dle2K3PNejU4%26list%3DPLR8_RxifMwL4JQTxYcIMA), designed especially for journalists to learn how to find, download and interpret our data.
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